

Functional Family Therapy

What is FFT?

- FFT is a family based intervention provided by specially trained FFT therapists
- FFT has been applied to a wide range of populations in juvenile justice, child welfare, and mental health systems.
- FFT has been proven effective with at risk youth including conduct disorder, violent externalizing behaviors and substance abuse.
- FFT works in specific phases that organize the intervention in a coherent manner
- FFT sessions occur in the family home
- FFT assists families not only to solve current problems, but also to build new strategies, skills and confidence for resolving future issues
- FFT occurs over 8-12 FFT sessions, lasting 3-4 months

FFT Referral Considerations...

- Does the youth have at least one “parent figure” who will be participating?
- Can FFT be “staggered” before or after other treatment priorities (i.e. Drug/Alcohol, Mental Health, or other Family Interventions) so that we do not overwhelm the family?
- Will the case remain open for at least 4 months to allow enough time for the intervention to be completed?
- Is the intent for reunification? If so, the goal is to refer to FFT when there is a clear plan for the youth to return home within two weeks or the youth has regular visits home so the FFT strategies can be effective. The referral will be accepted by the agency and a spot will be held. The intake session will occur when the youth’s return home is imminent.
- Is the youth in foster care? If so, has he/she been living in the home for about 6 months, so that behavioral patterns have emerged?

JPC/SW Communication With the Family Can Set the Stage for a Strong Beginning to FFT....

Ideas for things JPC's/SW's can say when talking to a family about the FFT referral...

- This program is at no cost to your family, and sessions will be provided in your home
- FFT is short term and found to be highly effective with families
- FFT is focused on the things that are presently impacting your family and can help deal with issues as they arise
- With family involved, changes happen quicker and last longer. Parents and youth will be expected to attend FFT sessions together
- FFT is a program that works with your family to be more effective in daily interactions
- FFT provides skill building, including communication, problem solving, conflict management, and parenting
- FFT can help your family figure out your family rules
- FFT has also been shown to have a positive impact on younger siblings
- The FFT Therapist has flexible hours and is willing to work with your family's schedule

